



JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
23 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0023

SUSAN A. GENDRON
COMMISSIONER

EXHIBIT VII.A.

To: Members of the State Board of Education

From: Susan A. Gendron, Commissioner*

Date: February 11, 2009

Subject: Major Capital School Construction Program; Concept Approval Consideration; RSU #1 Woolwich, PreK-8 school construction project.

STATEMENT OF FACT

The Woolwich school project was rated number 16 on the 2004-2005 Approved Projects List. The project will house grades preK-8. The project is an addition/renovation. Site Approval was granted by the State Board of Education on September 10, 2008.

A complete New vs. Renovation Study is on file with the Department of Education which supports the Department's recommendation to retain two sections of the present school. All appropriate State and local agencies have been contacted; and where necessary, documented approvals are on file. The building has been designed to High Performance Standards.

In arriving at a decision to develop a project on the Woolwich site, a great deal of work was done in advance. The architect was contracted to evaluate the other elementary schools in RSU #1. The architect also did a study to determine whether Bath Middle School could house grades 6-8 students from Woolwich. When all information was analyzed, it was determined that a preK-8 facility in Woolwich was the best solution.

In considering the Concept design, it was necessary to obtain additional frontage in order to gain better site lines at the entrance and to move a right of way away from the school.

It was determined that the existing gymnasium could be retained as well as the 1972 classroom wing. This is cost effective and does not inhibit the overall design of the school. The new classroom section will be three stories high thus keeping the facility compact and reducing the overall envelope.

The building will be heated with a wood chip boiler with an oil backup. The backup boiler is a boiler recently purchased and installed at the school.

Superintendent Shuttleworth has provided the following project description statement:

For twelve years, Woolwich Central School has been moving up the list for new school construction originally constructed in 1950, the Bailey building design has been added to twice increasing the school to serve children in grades K-8. Though the school has served our community well, the life cycle of the school has clearly come to its end and we are grateful that the Department of Education has determined the need to replace our school.

Woolwich Central School is the center of this community and beloved by the citizens of Woolwich. It has been a high performing school and the estimates indicate that we will be serving about 375 students in Pre K-8 by 2016. We did exhaustive studies to determine if any other options could be created to house the middle school portion of our Woolwich students. Without doubt, neither Bath Middle School nor any other option exists to meet the middle school needs of Woolwich students. As RSU #1 expands, it is our judgment that Woolwich will continue to grow and quickly fill the new school.

So why a new school at this time, especially in times of severe economic challenges? Quite frankly, Woolwich Central School will require massive amounts of repairs, despite the fact that our school district has dutifully maintained the school over the years. Our children will greatly benefit from a state of the art school that aligns with innovations we are embracing in the 21st Century. Truly RSU #1 is all about student achievement and we are confident that our new school will accelerate learning in exciting and diverse ways.

RSU #1 has the oldest collection of school buildings in the state of Maine and our excitement to build a new school in Woolwich brings unparalleled hope and promise to our communities. As part of the organizational structure of RSU #1, children are able to exert school choice, and given space availability, it is our hope that we will be able to continue to accommodate children from other communities within RSU #1.

In summary, on behalf of the Woolwich School community and RSU #1, we thank the State Board of Education for their continued vision and support for needed new school construction. Under state law, our referendum, scheduled in March, will require a RSU #1-wide vote to approve the new school, a vote that we expect will render overwhelming support for our school. RSU #1, leading the way in a new model for delivery of education, looks forward with great excitement to enriching our students with a new school to be open for the 2012-2013 school year.

This Concept Approval is being requested pursuant to M.R.S.A. Title 20-A, Section 15905(1).

RSU #1 is requesting Concept Approval for a preK-8 school qualifying under State statute and State Board of Education Rule, Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects.

Exhibit VII.A.
Concept Approval Consideration
RSU #1 Woolwich Grades PreK-8 School
Date: February 11, 2009
Page -3-

Project Information

Project: Woolwich Central School
Superintendent: William Shuttleworth
Principal: Thomas Sewall
Architect: Rick Malm, Lewis & Malm Architecture
School(s) to be closed: none

Project Budget Information

Total Project Cost: \$18,958,454
Local Only (no State participation): \$566,504
Approved for State/Local Debt Service Subsidy: \$18,238,609
Anticipated Maine High Performance Schools Energy Grant: \$153,341

CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Construction Committee on February 4, 2009, voted unanimously to recommend that the State Board of Education grant Concept Approval to RSU #1 for a preK-8 school in Woolwich.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

The Commissioner recommends that the State Board of Education grant Concept Approval to RSU #1 for a preK-8 school in Woolwich, Maine, as a Major Capital School Construction Project and approve the concept budget as presented.**

**Prepared by the School Facilities Services Team*

**This approval constitutes Concept Approval. Final Funding Approval may be subject to adjustment under Section 10, Subsection 1, of the State Board of Education Rules for School Construction Projects, which states:

“Final Funding Approval by the Commissioner establishes the Project Budget and takes place after construction bids have been received. At that time, the Commissioner may reduce the budget to finance the project, thus providing additional funds for other projects.”